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## THE END OF MARK IN THE CURETONIAN SYRIAC

AND THE FUTILITY OF USING IT TO SUPPORT THE APPENDIX.

**I**T is well known that, in the London manuscript of the Old Syriac Gospels, the whole of Mark is missing except verses 17-20 of the last chapter. The fragment reads thus:

*...that believe in me; these in my name shall cast out demons; with new tongues they shall speak; serpents they shall take up in their hands; and if any poison of death they drink, it shall not hurt them; on the diseased they shall lay their hands, and they shall become sound.*

*But our Lord Jesus, after that he had commanded his disciples, was exalted to heaven, and sat on the right [hand] of God. But they went forth, and preached in every place, and the Lord [was] with them in all, and their word he was confirming by the signs which they were doing.*

*Endeth Gospel of Mark.*

In the first edition of this Version (London, 1858, p. xliv) William Cureton, its discoverer, said:

“This very small remaining Fragment of St. Mark is an early testimony to the authenticity of the last twelve verses of this Gospel, which have been deemed spurious by some critics.”

In 1912, Sir Frederic Kenyon can still say of this fragment, that it “is sufficient to show that it contained the

last twelve verses of the Gospel." (*Handbook to the Textual Criticism of the New Testament*, 2d ed., London, 1912, p. 155.)

Yes: it contained them, but did it ascribe them to Mark? *Until we know what an ancient manuscript said at the juncture of the Gospel and the Appendix, we cannot tell how it treated the latter.*

Now, there are only two manuscripts extant of the Old Syriac Version: viz., this one and the Lewis Syriac on Mount Sinai, which omits the Mark Appendix altogether, clinching the omission with the red colophon at xvi. 8:

*Endeth Gospel of Mark.*

But while the Old Syriac has been reduced to two manuscripts, the Old Armenian survives in hundreds, five of which are in Philadelphia, and at least one apiece in Boston and New York. (There is a Syriac fragment in Berlin which probably belonged to the London Manuscript when it was in Egypt before 1842, and which shows the absence of the woman in adultery from John viii.) All scholars agree that there is a close relationship between these two neighboring Versions, the Syriac and the Armenian. Indeed, Armenian historians testify that their first translation was made not from Greek, but from Syriac. As was shown in a former article,<sup>1</sup> all Armenian manuscripts before A. D. 989 end Mark as does the Sinai Syriac, with the red colophon at xvi. 8. It was further shown that even those manuscripts which contain the Appendix often adopt various devices to mark their disapproval of it. One ascribes it to Ariston the Presbyter in a rubricated title squeezed in between verses 8 and 9; others say at verse 8:

*Read for the Ascension.*

<sup>1</sup> "The Six Endings of Mark in Later Manuscripts and Catholic and Protestant Imprints of the Old Armenian Version." (*Monist*, Oct., 1919.)

Others add the Appendix, but put the old colophon at xvi. 8, showing that this was the original end of the Gospel, fixed by the first translators (early fourth century, as Kenyon himself informs us, *op. cit.*, p. 172). They then begin the Appendix with a repeated title:

*Gospel according to Mark.*

Frederick Conybeare has told us that the Armenian Version is so slavishly literal and so accurately copied, that a medieval Armenian manuscript is equivalent to a Greek one of the fifth century. He might have added, or a Syriac one of the fourth.

Besides Armenian Manuscripts, Codex L at Paris, and other Greek ones, such as No. 1 at Basle and 209 at Venice, support my contention, as well as the Old Latin at Turin and the South Egyptian Version.

Now, *until we know what the London Manuscript said at Mark xvi. 8, we must cease to quote it as an authority in support of Aristion's Appendix as part of Mark.* Therefore, all critical editions of the Greek Testament, including Tischendorf, Tregelles and Soden themselves, must be corrected in their apparatus at this point.

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P. S. I have just secured the photograph of the oldest Armenian manuscript, A.D. 887 (Moscow, 1899). Of course it omits the Mark Appendix, the Adultery Section in John, the Bloody Sweat in Luke, etc.